

The Merchant of Venice

Written by Bob Snyder
17 December 2015

If you caught the last Republican debate, Donald Trump and others were on stage in **the Venetian hotel in Las Vegas**

. That casino stands on the site of the former Sands hotel and is owned by the **Las Vegas Sands Corporation** whose owner is a major contributor to Republican Party candidates.



While the city of Venice rests famously upon a foundation of loosely spaced wooden piles covered with plates of Istrian limestone, the Venetian Hotel & Casino was built on a foundation of dollars from the computer industry.

How did the computer industry, an industry known in Vegas by its annual visits to conventions as "non-gamblers," contribute to the making of the Venetian?

Remember **COMDEX** (1979-1995)?

It was the brainchild of **Sheldon Adelson**, the rapacious show organizer parlayed his computer trade show into Las Vegas casino ownership and a billionaire's influence on the American

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Republican party.

As of June 2015, Adelson (with a fortune of \$28 billion) was listed by Forbes as the 18th richest person in the world.

Now Forbes has put Adelson in the headlines again. This is the story:

In a market where no one is putting money into a newspaper business suffering from digital disruption, a mystery buyer paid a premium of \$140 million for the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. Normally newspaper owners are transparent but this secretive deal (supposedly part of the acquisition terms was ownership could not be revealed) made the headlines. Newsroom staffers were told that the new owners wanted to remain anonymous, making this this Las Vegas newspaper the largest in America where ownership was undeclared.

The *Society of Professional Journalists*, as well as others, urged the new owners to come forward, saying in a statement that the group is "very disappointed and concerned by the owners' lack of transparency."

Now Forbes claims the owner is Sheldon Adelson: Patrick Dumont, listed on the website of Las Vegas Sands Corp. as the company's senior VP finance and strategy, put together the deal for his father-in-law, the chairman and CEO of the casino operator.

One day before the Forbes article, at the CNN GOP debate in the Venetian, Adelson told CNN..."I have no personal interest" in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. The reporter says, "Adelson batted away speculation that he is one of the new owners of the newspaper. He repeatedly indicated that he is not. He seemed to be enjoying the guessing game."

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[The Las Vegas Review Journal](#)